

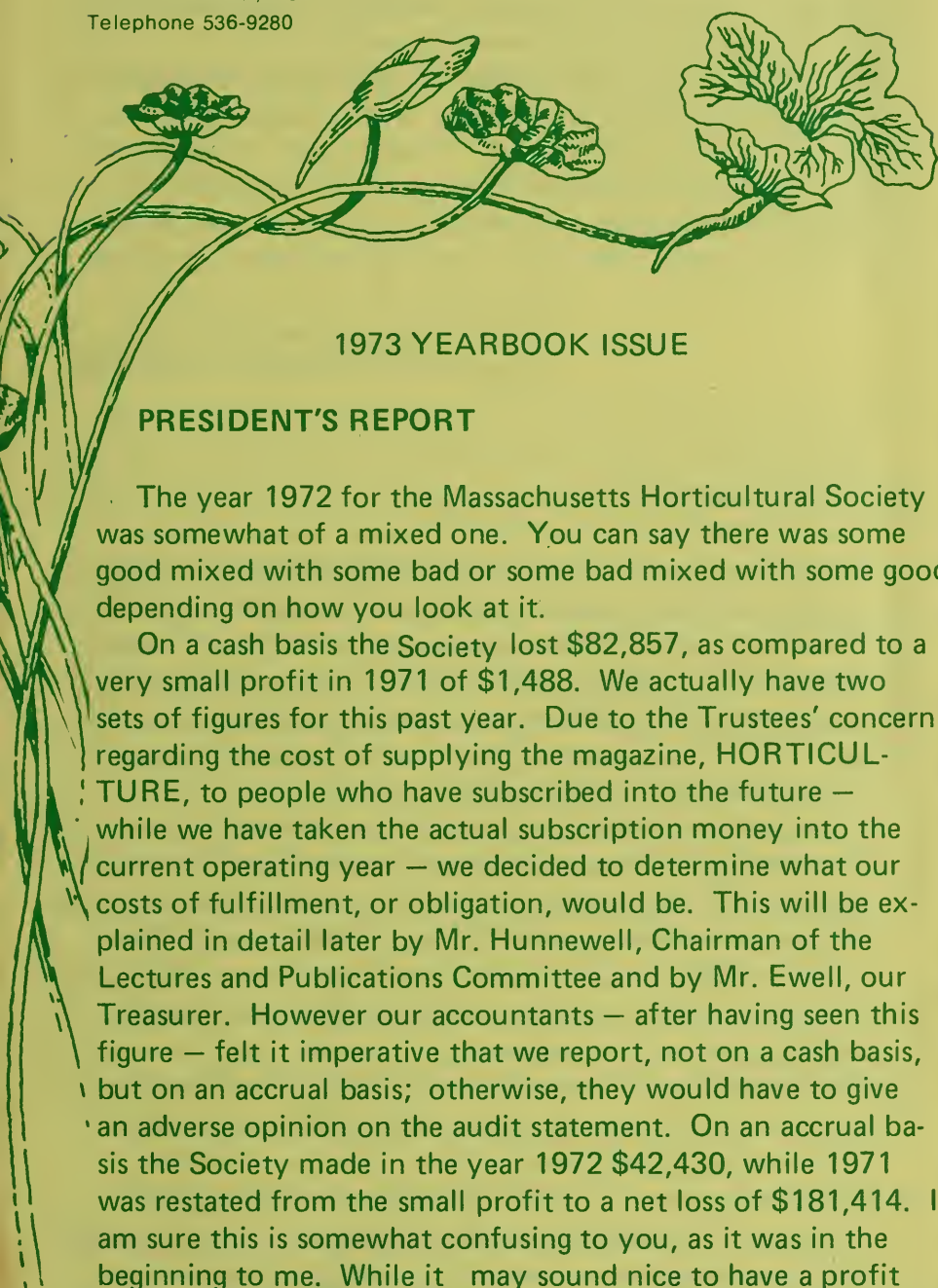
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MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

HORTICULTURAL HALL

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1973 YEARBOOK ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The year 1972 for the Massachusetts Horticultural Society was somewhat of a mixed one. You can say there was some good mixed with some bad or some bad mixed with some good, depending on how you look at it.

On a cash basis the Society lost \$82,857, as compared to a very small profit in 1971 of \$1,488. We actually have two sets of figures for this past year. Due to the Trustees' concern regarding the cost of supplying the magazine, *HORTICULTURE*, to people who have subscribed into the future — while we have taken the actual subscription money into the current operating year — we decided to determine what our costs of fulfillment, or obligation, would be. This will be explained in detail later by Mr. Hunnewell, Chairman of the Lectures and Publications Committee and by Mr. Ewell, our Treasurer. However our accountants — after having seen this figure — felt it imperative that we report, not on a cash basis, but on an accrual basis; otherwise, they would have to give an adverse opinion on the audit statement. On an accrual basis the Society made in the year 1972 \$42,430, while 1971 was restated from the small profit to a net loss of \$181,414. I am sure this is somewhat confusing to you, as it was in the beginning to me. While it may sound nice to have a profit on an accrual basis, what is important to the Society's finances is that on a cash basis we had a substantial loss of over \$82,000.

On the brighter side, our membership responded very favorably to our Annual Fund Drive in the amount of \$43,470. In addition we received several major bequests, totaling \$27,800, and a further \$1,300 from unsolicited gifts. Such generous contributions are vital to the life of the Society, as can readily be seen by subtracting these substantial amounts

from last year's operating record. We are deeply indebted for this support.

Our recent major disappointment involved the Hancock Pavilion. After last year's Annual Meeting of the Society I. M. Pei & Associates presented to our membership a concept of a cultural pavilion that was to be the recycled John Hancock Clarendon Street Building. The Children's Museum and the Boston Center for Adult Education, as well as ourselves, were to move into this glass-roofed edifice as our headquarters. The Staff and members of the Board spent a good deal of their time and energies in an effort to culminate this project. On February 12th I wrote to the membership announcing the termination of this concept due to Hancock's building problems. John Hancock paid all of our expenses except for staff time. These expenses included the architectural plans and the Gladstone Associates' feasibility study, which called for the Society to have — among other things — greater visibility and program to serve the public on a day-to-day basis. While this project now will not happen, I certainly do not feel that our time and energies were fully wasted. We developed a careful insight as to what the Society has been, is today and, more importantly, what we think it should be in the future. I personally thank the John Hancock organization for having brought us this far, and I sympathize with them in the problems they are experiencing.

Last year the Society produced its film, *All These Things*. Depicted were many of the activities of our organization such as the Hub Box for school children, our efforts in Mattapan, and what goes into putting a Spring Flower Show extravaganza together as well as the final results. If you have not yet seen this 27-minute film I urge you to do so. Incidentally, it is available for a rental fee of \$25, should you or your local organizations wish to take advantage of it.

A new symbol — a sunflower burst — was designed and sent out to the membership. It represents the modernization and new direction of the Society and symbolizes the warmth and energy that come from the sun — beauty and productivity unified. The symbol does not replace the Society's traditional seal; it is meant to complement it.

I regret to report that, unfortunately, the Fall Show had to be canceled at the last minute. This was caused by financial changes outside of and beyond the Society's control. However, the Spring Show returned with a flourish and a flair to the Commonwealth Armory. Many people were glad to see the Show back in the city once again. From a financial point of view it came in under budget and with a larger attendance than anticipated. It was good for Boston, good for the State, and netted the Society over \$45,000.

It is with deep sadness that I report the death of three past Trustees this last year. John O. Stubbs, Trustee from 1966

to 1971, became Vice-President in 1967 and so served until his retirement. His greatest contribution to the Society was his four-year reign as Chairman of the Committee on Lectures and Publications. His tireless efforts for our publication HORTICULTURE produced substantial results, for which we should be eternally grateful. Mrs. Roger S. Warner, Trustee for 31 years, served on many committees and was probably best known as Chairman of the Committee on Exhibitions of the Products of Children's Gardens. Her efforts in this area bore fruitful results. Seth L. Kelsey, Honorary Trustee, served on the Board for 13 years, from 1952 to 1965. As well as being on the Committee on Medals and Chairman of the Membership Committee he served on the Exhibitions Committee, which he chaired in 1957 and 1958. We shall greatly miss these dedicated members.

Dr. George H. M. Lawrence, who gave invaluable help to the Library Committee, unfortunately had to resign due to ill health. Two Trustees are retiring this year. Mrs. Charles F. Hovey, Trustee for nine years, has served most notably as either Chairman or Co-Chairman of the Spring Show Preview Party since its inception in 1966. Among other committees on which she has served she has been particularly helpful to me on the Executive Committee. Mrs. Charles G. Rice is a gardener's gardener if there ever was one. She has worked diligently on the Program Committee and has been especially instrumental in returning the Daffodil Show to Horticultural Hall. I hope these two grand ladies will continue to serve the Society proudly as members of the Trustees Emeriti.

Finally, I report the retirement of Mrs. Muriel Crossman. She served as Librarian for over ten years and unquestionably is the greatest asset the library has had in its recent past. We wish her happiness in her retirement.

In closing, I would like to thank each of the members of the Board and the Staff for their dedicated service.

Russell B. Clark, President

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

On December 31, 1972 the total membership was 5,494, as compared with 5,351 at the end of 1971.

During the year 600 new members were added, compared to 540 in 1971. Of the total membership 396 failed to renew in 1972 and 61 were reported deceased, resulting in a net increase for the year of 143.

Membership income increased from \$83,180 in 1971 to \$84,294 in 1972.

Mary W. (Mrs. Samuel H.) Wolcott
Chairman, Membership Committee

TREASURER'S REPORT

Some of you may remember that my report as Treasurer a year ago was encouraging, in that for 1971 the Society had shown a slight profit for the first time in many years. I did temper my remarks by pointing out that the surplus was primarily due to the "windfall" received by the pre-renewal promotion of HORTICULTURE magazine, which resulted in some \$180,000 in cash received in 1971 toward future delivery of magazines.

In my three years as Treasurer I have always had some doubts as to our reporting our financial condition on a cash basis, which was traditional for the Society — in other words, making no provision for commitments incurred that would require cash outlays in future fiscal periods. The "windfall" mentioned above was a dramatic example of using current cash for current expenses, rather than setting aside a portion of the cash for liabilities that we knew we were responsible for in the years to come.

Thanks to improved computer programming we were able to develop for the first time in 1972 accurate predictions of what commitments we actually had in 1973 and the years thereafter for delivery of unfulfilled HORTICULTURE subscriptions.

In reviewing the 1971 figures compared to 1972 our auditors, Alexander Grant & Company, became very conscious of these wide swings in cash receipts. With my concurrence and that of Allan McLeod, our Comptroller, it was decided that we should shift our accounting practice to an accrual, rather than a cash, basis. Accrual accounting is used by most profit-making corporations to reflect the position of the company properly, that is, allocating both income and expenses to the actual fiscal period involved.

This has been a rather lengthy preamble, but necessary to explain a drastic revision of our 1971 figures, as well as the financial results for 1972. On a cash basis 1972 resulted in a loss of \$82,857, but using the accrual method — whereby some of the 1971 receipts were allocated to 1972 — we now show a profit of \$42,430. Naturally, this alters the 1971 figures dramatically; previously reported as a profit of \$1,488, they now become a loss of \$181,414. However, we are now in a more realistic position to judge both our present status and our future potential.

Certainly we should be proud of the increase in membership income of \$2,200, the increase in book value of investments of almost \$50,000, the magnificent jump in both Spring Show and Spring Show Preview 1972 of \$23,000 and \$6,000, respectively. These figures are very encouraging, but

we must feel our way with HORTICULTURE magazine; we must acknowledge that the library at present is a drain of some \$30,000 a year and appreciate that, while general expenses covering the building and offices were reduced by \$10,000 in 1972, we are stretching our luck in avoiding major expenses on Horticultural Hall.

In conclusion, as President Clark has said, we are doing well in some areas and poorly in others. I would like to stress, however, that in order to carry out the concept of the Society we must look for innovations in programming and new sources of income to achieve greater participation in our overall effort.

John W. Ewell, Treasurer

HORTICULTURE REPORT

The President and Treasurer have both reported on the cash and accrual accounting systems as they apply to HORTICULTURE, hence I need not comment on the situation.

The loss on a cash basis for 1972 was about \$45,000, compared to a budgeted loss of \$8,000. The primary reason for this disappointing performance was the failure of our readers to renew their subscriptions at a satisfactory rate. Therefore, to keep our circulation above the 130,000 subscribers we promise our advertisers, we were forced to spend \$30,000 over budget in promotion to obtain new readers.

This situation has caused debate among the Staff, the Publisher and the members of your Publications Committee as to whether our readers fail to renew because they do not like the magazine or because we do not attract the proper subscribers in the first place. After extensive testing of different offers, we have found that a half-price offer is the best method of attracting new subscribers. The argument is whether these people who subscribe at half-price are really only bargain hunters, who cannot be expected to renew their subscriptions the following year at the full price.

To resolve this dilemma we are constantly trying to improve the editorial content of the magazine; by editorial content I mean all of the articles, as opposed to the advertising, not just the very fine editorials of Carlton Lees. For example, we are this year planning four major features in addition to the regular articles. On the other hand, to improve the quality of our new subscribers, we are also constantly trying to find and test new and better lists. (I define quality as a subscriber who has a real interest and will renew.)

In 1972 we created a new category, called a Subscribing Member of the Society, which is an effort to offer more to our subscribers. This is really more of a psychological attrac-

tion to them, and does not in any way infringe on the rights of our regular full members.

On the good side our advertising income increased 35 per cent, from \$188,000 in 1971 to \$248,000 in 1972, and I believe we can continue to make significant gains in this area. The magazine is now running just about half-and-half advertising and editorial content. And our Classified section is providing a very real service to our readers; in the current May issue it totals seven and one-third pages.

Because of the financial troubles of the magazine over the past few years, I think I tend to pay too much attention to the strictly dollars and cents side of the picture. The purpose of the magazine is not to make money, but to increase the horticultural knowledge, interest and enthusiasm of its readers. From that point of view, I think we are doing a good job.

Willard P. Hunnewell, Chairman
Lectures & Publications Committee

PROGRAM REPORT

Seven years ago, in September of 1966, the Planning Committee of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society brought to the Board of Trustees a three-page report with specific recommendations. This report and Committee were succeeded by other reports and committees, all of which contributed to our progress. Somehow, while we have made progress, we have yet to achieve many of the goals.

In the report of 1966, four points bear repeating:

1. That the Society recognize and give new emphasis to the role of horticulture in the creation and conservation of human environment, and make every effort to establish and carry forward as comprehensive a program as possible to become a more important influence for improving the quality of that environment.
 2. That the Society take the leadership in fundamental programs and activities which contribute to the overall advancement of horticulture.
 3. That the Society make every possible effort to establish or cause to be established appropriate information/meeting/class/demonstration centers, on its own or in cooperation with appropriate organizations and/or institutions, throughout the Commonwealth.
 4. That the Society make every effort to establish a conservatory-gallery in Boston to most effectively demonstrate man's dependence on plants, and to interpret such displays for students of every level through appropriate agencies.
- These points make clear the fact that the Society's basic function is not service to members.

With the exception of our Hub Box program, which in 1972 involved 31 trained volunteers who reached 800 third and fourth graders in Boston classrooms, and of a few volunteers whom we recruit from time to time for other public-oriented events, practically all services to the horticultural and geographic communities are carried out by staff. In 1972 staff members in 75 instances contributed their professional skills as project and program advisors to other organizations and institutions. They made 20 radio and television appearances on behalf of the Society and authored a total of 105 articles for HORTICULTURE and for other publications. They provided judging skills for flower shows, exhibits, neighborhood 4-H fairs. The staff delivered 28 lectures, to such groups as the Associated Landscape Contractors of Massachusetts, the Association for Better Housing in Mattapan, the Fenway Garden Society, Massachusetts Aborists, high school and college student groups, natural history teachers and many others.

There are of course meetings at which the staff must represent the Society and also keep in touch with what is going on. I am thinking of the Governor's meeting on environmental reorganization, for example, the American Horticultural Congress, the Mailorder Association of Nurserymen. We also must attend many of the meetings of the special plant societies, particularly those which involve planning for cooperative events such as the Rose Show with the New England Rose Society. And in November the Society organized a "Meet the Plant Societies" exhibition, staged in the lobby of the Prudential Tower, which attracted some 2,500 people.

Our VoAg Days, designed to help students in vocational agricultural and horticultural high schools to become more aware of career possibilities, brought 220 young people to Horticultural Hall on two occasions. Another 42 participated in the all-day plant identification and judging contest at the Spring Flower Show. And 1,600 sunflower planting kits were distributed to 40 Boston classrooms in 40 schools.

The Society also carries on an informal but nonetheless helpful employment service for gardeners in search of gardens and gardens in search of gardeners. Six placements were made during 1972.

It is more obvious that our Garden Information is very definitely a public service. Over 6,500 requests for information were answered by telephone and mail last year — and those are only the ones which were counted.

Two of the most conspicuous of the Society's programs which go far beyond membership are its publication, HORTICULTURE, and the library. Both have been and continue to be the cause of financial concern; yet they are the two most important tools we possess. When you realize that HORTICULTURE reaches over 400,000 readers every month you can readily appreciate that, editorially, we are doing something for

gardens and gardening throughout the United States. But do you also realize that HORTICULTURE is an important vehicle for producers of horticultural goods and services? During 1972 we serviced 293 display and 400 classified advertisers. The Society certainly is doing its job for promoting horticulture (as a subject) in the market place.

During 1972 the ten-year Supplement to the Dictionary Catalog of the Library was published. These volumes are in 80-100 libraries throughout the world, and that alone should say something to us about the importance of the collection. Yet we now find ourselves asking how much longer we can go on maintaining, for the good of society at large, what must be in the realm of a national treasure. Remember, this library was founded 33 years before the Department of Agriculture. But here we are, wondering if perhaps we should break up the collection and keep only a current circulating collection. It is very difficult to measure the effectiveness of the library in numbers, but perhaps when a Joseph Ewan of Tulane University or a Dr. Stern, Director of the British Museum, makes use of this collection we cannot be altogether sure how much the numbers mean. It is also true that these and other serious scholars would find the references, no matter where or how they were housed. Is there a way of funding the library properly? By properly I mean that, in addition to the \$32,000 it consumed of 1972 operating revenues, it should also be charged appropriately for heat, light and rent. It also would be far more effective if we could afford a staff large enough and scholarly enough to mine the library's treasures in the name of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

The activities which are, in the main, member-oriented — classes/workshops/courses — along with the many exhibits and shows, bring in enough in registration fees and admissions to carry their own weight. The Spring Flower Show, back in Boston for the first time in many years, more than paid for itself and, fortunately, contributed about \$35,000 to other program activities as well as another \$25,000 for overall Society operation. The Taylor Greenhouse in Waltham is our first "out-station" and, thanks to a very hard-working and generous committee, is still in the black ink. The Hub Box classroom program is supported by a steady flow of \$25.00 contributions from garden clubs everywhere.

When the Society was founded there were but 24 states and our nation was but 53 years old. We were, in effect, "national" in our thinking. But it was a smaller nation. After a recent analysis of our membership (4,300 of 5,800 living within the arc of Route 495) I am wondering if we are really a Massachusetts Horticultural Society. So, as I look back on that report of September, 1966 and reflect on the *throughout Massachusetts* which appears with reference to the establishment of information/meeting/demonstration centers, I ques-

tion it. I know from experience that it is difficult enough to get broad membership support within the confines of Route 495, let alone throughout the Commonwealth.

Certainly much that we do is a reflection of the points made. Our problem is that we do not do enough conspicuously enough; hence we fail to express to a very large public what we are on a day-to-day basis. It is for this reason that so many have felt the urban conservatory-gallery concept was a good one. We need a green facility where children can come by the school bus load day in, day out. Only when we get masses of children and their parents coming to us will they begin to understand what we are. When members of the staff go to Gloucester or Mattapan to work with a group we are only nice, helpful guys. We cannot look like the Massachusetts Horticultural Society; we cannot express in a whole sense what the Society is all about; we can work only on a small scale. And while it is important to work with people as individuals, with the proper kind of program and facilities — and I mean specifically a year-round exhibition of living plants — we could reach thousands, because the exhibits would do the talking, the demonstrating, the teaching.

There is great pessimism and gloom now that the Hancock Pavilion is no longer a possibility in our future. I am willing to bet that with today's concern for green environments somebody is going to build such an exhibition facility in Boston. It is, in my opinion, the only conceivable way to reach masses of people and find new sources of income at the same time. If we were starting a new corporation we would have to sell shares. Cannot we get people to buy shares in Boston's future? We are a respected and important institution, yet most of the time we go around as if we were ashamed of ourselves. If we are second class, it is our own fault. I think it is time to fight for a future bigger than our past. Otherwise, we might as well fold up now and go out of existence.

In closing, and with the approval of Mrs. Charles Rice, I want to read a paragraph from a letter which came to the Society, with a gift check, in March:

The recent hope for the Society having fallen through, again we wait to know what future planning is in prospect. The recent tragic death of the Rices' son to us points to the ever greater need for Boston to keep its cultural, educational and scientific institutions and increase their scope from within the city. If our cities cannot overcome the present threats to their viability, then the blight will spread to the suburbs. The city gave us the glory of the past, and the city has to be a major factor in whatever can be hoped for in the future.

Carlton B. Lees, Executive Director

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1973-1974

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